

THE GLOSSA ORDINARIA ON THE PROPHET JONAH

**TRANSLATED
BY JOHN LITTERAL**



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PREFACE

This translation of the Gloss on the prophet Jonah comes from the Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps (Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81). Many of the marginal glosses were drawn by the glossator from St. Jerome's commentary on the prophet Jonah, oftentimes not exactly word for word but condensed and sometimes paraphrased. The Latin version is also found in a transcribed version found on the wonderful website (glossae.net), who is made up of a scholarly team that are in the process of transcribing the complete Glossa Ordinaria so that translators can get this excellent Medieval glossed Bible into the hands of modern readers in their own language.

This translation is for the general audience. The layout of the translation is in the fashion of a modern Bible commentary where the Scripture verses are provided, with the interlinear glosses directly underneath, and the marginal glosses directly underneath the interlinear glosses.

John Litteral
Ashland, Kentucky

THE GLOSSA ORDINARIA ON THE PROPHET JONAH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

PROLOGUE TO THE BEGINNING of the prophet Jonah

The Hebrews affirm that the holy Jonah was the son of a widow named Zarephath; which Elijah the prophet raised him up from the dead, and the mother told him afterwards: "*Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and the word of the Lord in your mouth is true.*" (1 Kgs 17:24)." For this reason, the boy was called "son of Amathi." For Amathi means 'truth' in our language. And it is said, Behold, from the fact that Elijah spoke the truth, he is said to be a son who was raised from the truth. Therefore, it is true that Jonah means truth. So from the truth the dove is born because Jonah the dove cried out. Moreover Jonah is sent to the Gentiles in condemnation of Israel because while Nineveh makes repentance, Israel persevered in wickedness. Indeed, during the time of king Jeroboam of Israel, who forsook God and sacrificed to idols with his people in Samaria, the fourth book of Kings (2 Kings/4 Kings-Vulgate 14:25) shows that Jonah had been a prophet. Despite his prophesy illuminating the sins of the city of Nineveh, he would see them gain the mercy of God; he did not wish to go to warn of the destruction of their city, lest he seemed to be preaching falsehood. For just as God spoke to Abraham about the impiety of Sodom and Gomorrah saying: "*The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has come to me*" (see Gn 18:20-21)." so it is said also about Nineveh because the cry of their wickedness had ascended up to Him. And because the sentence of God, once made was not to be revoked, so also Jonah did not wish for the sentence brought forward against Nineveh to be revoked, because he was ignorant of the Divine dispensation which prefers the salvation of men in turning to God rather than destruction (see 2 Peter 3:9). This happened to him as also to the holy Elisha who did not know the son of the Shunammite woman was dead (2 Kings 4:31-2). Jonah, when fleeing before God in humanity, must have thought of David when he said, "*Where shall I go from your spirit? or where shall I flee from your presence?*" (Ps 139:7)

Here begins the summary.

Jonah, the most beautiful dove, prefiguring the passion of the Lord through his shipwreck, calls the world to repentance and under the name of Nineveh declares salvation to the nations.

Jonah, which means the 'dove' and the 'grieving' son of Amathi, who was from Gath, which is in Ofer, is sent to proclaim to the nations. Having been sent, he scorns God's command; scorning, he flees; fleeing, he sleeps. Because of him the ship is endangered, Fate finds him hiding. After being thrown overboard, a whale devoured him and regurgitated him back out as he was praying. Having been regurgitated, he spoke of ruin of the city, but grows depressed in the repentance of the city and is jealous of the salvation of the Gentiles. He rejoices in the shadow of the green vine and grieves when it suddenly withers. Whose grave is mentioned to be in a tomb in one of the cities of Gath, which is in the second mile from Sephora, on the journey to go on to Tiberias.

No one is a better interpreter of his own type than He who inspired the prophets and which marked out the lines of the truth of the future for its servants. He who said to the Jews, who were ignorant of Christ the son of God, said: "*The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they did penance at the preaching of Jonah. And behold a greater than Jonah here.*" (Mt 12:41)". The carnal Jew is condemned while the world believes, while Nineveh does penance, the unbeliever perishes.

CHAPTER 1

1:1

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amathi, saying:

Jonah- Upon which the Spirit of Christ, in the form of a dove, is also grieving for us.

Amathi- Means truth; because God is Truth.

saving- From the Father to the Son.

Now. He connects with a conjunction, namely 'now', to those things which were occupying the mind and spirit of the prophet.

Now. In the manner of a prophet, seeing in the spirit many things about many things, he breaks forth in these words.

1:2

Arise and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach in it: For the wickedness thereof is come up before me.

great city. Namely the world, so that the whole world may receive Him whom the Jew disdains. The world which God has made as a beautiful abode for man to serve him in, who because he has wandered from the way in his pride is called back to repentance.

Jonah, whose name means dove, was sent to Nineveh, which is spacious. The world, through Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, which is the artwork of the Creator, whence in the Greek language the world received its name from adornment, for it is called cosmos, therefore it is said, so that "*God saw all that he had made, and they were very good* (Gen 1:10)." So how Israel refused to listen, the whole world laid aside their ignorance, therefore, the Son of God came down in humility so that they might ascend into heaven. With Jonah, according to the figurative interpretation, the figure of Christ is displayed. It is not necessary that the whole order of its history should be given an allegorical interpretation to Christ. But let us strive to make those connections, but only understood in a way that is without danger to the interpretation. For although, as the Apostle asserts, the Sacrament of Christ and the Church has primarily been prefigured beforehand by the first ⁴parents, though not everything spoken about these very parents can refer to this Sacrament.

is come up. The same is in Genesis, "*the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is multiplied* (Gn 18:20). And to Cain, "*The voice of thy brother's blood cries out to me from the earth* (Gn 4:10)."

¹ This may be a reference to Adam and Eve as the "first parents", in which case *premissum* can be translated as "prefigured". The union of Adam and Eve functions as a prefiguration of Christ's relation with the Church. It looks like the author is warning the reader that not everything said about Adam and Eve should be interpreted in this light

1:3

And Jonah rose up to flee into Tharsis from the face of the Lord, and he went down to Joppe, and found a ship going to Tharsis: and he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them to Tharsis from the face of the Lord,

rose up: The prophet knew by a revelation from the Holy Spirit, that the repentance of the people of Nineveh is the destruction of the Jews. In this situation it is not that he is trying to save Nineveh, but that he did not want to see it destroyed. He knew Moses had prayed for Israel and they were saved. He had seen the prophets also be sent to the Jews evoking them to repentance, even Balaam's prophecy of the salvation of the Jews (Num 23:24). Therefore grieving, being the only person chosen for this job, he was cast to the enemy's city, where they worshiped idols and had contempt of God. He knew that once the Gentiles believed then the Jews would be blinded. This time he was afraid of his own preaching, lest it be done in his own time; unless there was a total conversion of the Jews with the Gentiles; for he wished to flee.

According to Josephus, Tharsis is a city in Cilicia; as we read in the book of Chronicles (2 Chron 20:36-37) it is a place of India. According to the Hebrews Tharsis means more generally 'sea', according to the passage: "*by a fierce wind you will break the ships of Tarshish* (Ps 47:8)!" But this is more pertinent when talking about a fugitive or one who is afraid, that he does not choose carefully where he wants to flee to, but the sea was enough for him. Or secondly Tharsis means 'the contemplation of joy', the prophet hastens to hurry towards the joy and to rejoice in the pleasure of rest, to give himself completely over of contemplation, in which Joppe is signified, which means 'beautiful.' For he thinks that it is better to rejoice in beauty and in the variety of knowledge than for an opportunity for the salvation of the Gentiles at the cost of letting his own people die, from whom Christ would have been born according to the flesh.

In the mystical sense, this can refer to Christ who took upon flesh, fleeing His country, in a certain way, that is from Heaven, He came into Tharsis, that is, in the sea of this world, He cried out: '*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me* (Mt 26:39)', lest the multitude of the Jews be condemned. He had such love of his country and of the promise of Abraham, that He said to the Father while on the cross, '*Father, forgive them; they know not what they do* (Lk 23:34)'. For in this love which is at the edge of the shore of Judea, which is called 'very beautiful' because since he was in Judea, he did not want to take the bread of sons to give it to dogs. But because he had come for the flocks of Israel (see Mt 10:6; 15:24) he paid the price to those who transported him. Thus He who at first wants to save his own people, saves the inhabitants from the storms of the sea, (that is His suffering and the insults of the cross) He submerged into Hell and saves those whom He had seemed to neglect by appearing to be asleep on the boat (see Mt 8:24-25).

1:4

But the Lord sent a great wind to the sea: and a great tempest was raised in the sea, and the ship was in danger to be broken.

the Lord- Nothing is safe when you oppose God!

great tempest- When everything was previously quiet.

the ship was in danger- Because it has taken on board a dangerous passenger. Violently crushed by the struggle.

For the flight of the prophet can be signified in the human race, who, forsaking the commands of God, flees from His face and goes out into the world. But in consequence a storm of wickedness and the shipwreck of the entire world are sent against him, and he is made to pay attention to God and to return to that which he had fled. From this we can understand that what appears to be advantageous to mankind, turns into their downfall by God's will. And not only is their aid no use to those whom it is offered to men, but even those who offer it are crushed, because they helped Israel against the will of the Lord (see Is 20:3-6).

1:5

And the mariners were afraid, and the men cried to their god: and they cast forth the wares that were in the ship, into the sea, to lighten it of them: and Jonah went down into the inner part of the ship, and fell into a deep sleep.

the men cried: They do not know the truth, but they do not forget the providence of God, and with a false religion they know that there is something to pray to. But for Israel, neither prosperity nor wickedness can lead her back to know God. Christ weeps for the people, but He has dry eyes, even though they mourn.

fell into a deep sleep: Some who are confused describe the prophet as secure and tranquil in the interior of the ship, enjoying a peaceful sleep. Or it can be said that he knows he is a fugitive and a sinner, and all the other men do not know why there is a storm, he himself does not dare to see the waves swelling up against himself. And if he sleeps, this is not necessarily a sign of his security, but of worry, as the apostles gave in to sleep on account of the Lord's suffering (Lk 22:45).

The sleep of the prophet and his terrible torture represents a man who has fallen asleep from the numbness of his wickedness: not only has he fled from God but moreover he ignores the wrath of God as he is clouded by a sort of madness. He sleeps therefore in a kind of false security and his deep sleep sounds out through his nostrils.

²**Tropologically.** There are many men sailing with Jonah, who each have their own God and hasten towards the 'contemplation of joy'. But when Jonah has been discovered by lot and his death has appeased the all-encompassing storm and made calm the waters, then the one God is revered and spiritual victims are sacrificed, which according to the text were not found when they were amongst the waves.

² 'Tropologically' means the allegorical exposition.

1:6

And the ship master came to him and said to him: Why are you fast asleep? rise up call upon your God, if so be that God will think of us that we may not perish.

came to him- It is natural that every man has more confidence in someone other than himself when they feel themselves to be in such danger.

ship master- The one who had to comfort others while troubled by such a great crisis.

Why are you- He reprimanded Jonah for his thoughtless security.

rise up call upon- Jonah shared everyone's danger, and therefore he had to pray along with everyone else.

came to him: But after the captain woke him up, he compelled Jonah to offer prayers to his God right away, not realizing that his flight removed such liberty of approaching God.

1:7

And they said everyone to his fellow: Come and let us cast lots, that we may know why this evil is upon us. And they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

why this evil- That is an affliction.

And they said everyone to his fellow: They had experience of the sea and knew the causes of the storms and winds and the rising waves, but they must never before have found by lot the person to blame for the shipwreck, and through him tried to avoid the danger.

Because Matthias is chosen by lot, and Jonah a fugitive is caught by lot, not working by the virtue of the lot, but by the will of God, who rules the uncertain lots. We should not therefore trust in this example, or use lots, because laws for individuals cannot make a law for all. By the will of God Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar learn the future through the discernment of dreams, however dreams should not always be believed.

1:8

And they said to him: Tell us for what cause this evil is upon us, what is your business? of what country are you? and are you going? or of what people you are?

what is your business- What is your occupation?

of what country- Of what region or what country are your people?

Tell us. They ask about his character, his homeland, his destination, and his city in order to discover the cause of the catastrophe.

1:9

And he said to them: I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, and the God of heaven, who made both the sea and the dry land.

I am of the Hebrews- One who passes by, like Abraham and the patriarchs, who were strangers of this world.

I fear- That is, I worship Him who you do not know, or I fear as a slave, though I do not love as a son.

the God- Not out to the gods you worship but Him who made all things and in all things He is able.

the sea- that I flee to,

the dry land- that I flee from.

I am a Hebrew: He did not say "I am a Jew," by which name they began to be called when the ten tribes were divided into two, but he said, "I am a Hebrew," which was a general name for both the two and the ten tribes.

When he had told them that he feared the Lord, he also indicated that he had fled from the commands of the Lord Himself and did not do as told. For this reason the men realized that he is holy, and from a holy nation, and the One that he fled from was great. They do not intend to hand him over to the sea, yet they cannot hide him.

When he confesses who made the sea and the dry land, why should he think he can escape by way of the sea from the Creator of the sea?

1:10

And the men were greatly afraid, and they said to him: Why have you done this? (For the men knew that he fled from the face of the Lord: because he had told them.)

they said to him: They reprehend blame, and as they said beforehand, if this God that you fear is so powerful, then how can you believe that you will be able to escape him? Or questioning, they are wanting to know the cause of his flight; why does he leave the safety of his own land and seek the sea?

1:11

And they said to him: What shall we do with you, that the sea may be calm to us? for the sea flowed and swelled.

And- By doing so.

for the sea flowed- This is the reason why they were asking these things.

flowed- By the will of God in pursuing the fugitive.

swelled- To show to the delaying sailors that it would not postpone the vengeance of the Creator.

What shall we do with you: They begged Jonah to give himself up for the sin he has committed, as if to say: You have revealed the cause of this wickedness, now tell us how to stop it. We understand that the sea swells and God's wrath is against us because we received a fugitive. But if we kill you, will the punishment be lessened? But since you are a worshiper of God, command what we are to do, by which we may appease God, so that the sea may cease.

1:12

And he said to them: take me up, and cast me into the sea, and the sea shall be calm to you: for I know for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

Take me- The storm seeks me, therefore seize me so that my death might let you live.

for I know- And I am not unaware that this is my punishment, this confusion of the elements, and since I will have felt the full effect of the storm you will be in calm seas again.

upon you- Which has received me.

And he said to them. The fugitive does not hide or deny his guilt, but having confessed his guilt he accepts his punishment willingly. He would rather die alone so that the other sailors do not perish on account of him, and so that he does not add to the sin with others dying. At the same time when he sees the sailors saved and converted, he learns that a large number of Nineveh can be saved by a similar confession.

Allegorically. These winds and waves refer to Christ and to the Church in peril, or even to Christ awaking the Apostles, who, deserting Him in the Passion, in a certain way cast Him into the waves. And it is as if Christ says, because the world sees me sailing with you, to the 'contemplation of joy,' *that where I am, there you may be also* (Jn 14:3). For that reason death rages and longs to devour me; death does not know that just as the fish is captured by the fish-hook, so death will die by my death. Take me up and cast me into the sea. The storm rages against you because of me. I will not restrain your execution, but receive it with open arms from others, unless love is in danger.

1:13

And the men rowed hard to return the land, but they were not able: because the sea tossed and swelled upon them.

the men rowed. The prophet has pronounced the sentence against himself; but the sailors do not dare touch him because they have learned that he is a follower of God. They labored to return to the land, preferring to die than kill. If the sailors rowed to regain the land, it was because they were thinking that the ship was able to save them from danger, apart from the mystery of him who was to suffer, whereas the sinking of Jonah would be the relief of the ship.

1:14

And they cried to the Lord, and said: We beseech you, O Lord let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for you, oh Lord, have done as it pleased you.

We beseech- The sailors' faith is strong: they are all in danger of losing their lives, and yet pray for the lives of another. They know well that spiritual death is worse than natural death of the body.

And they cried. They call God to witness that whatever they do should not be reckoned against them. It is as if they said, "We do not wish, Lord, to destroy your prophet, but he himself has proclaimed your wrath, and the storm shows us that you have done what you wished." The speech of the sailors seems to be the confession of Pilate, who, taking the water, washed his hands and said, "*I am innocent of the blood of this just man* (Mt 27:24)." The Gentiles do not want Christ to die, and affirm that He is innocent. And the Jews say, "*His blood be upon us and upon our children* (Mt 27:25)."

And when we welcomed the passenger, the sea swelled, which tells what we must do, and revealed what is the effect of your will. In this way the Savior speaks in the Psalm, "*O Lord, I wanted to do your will* (Ps 39:9)."

Before the suffering of Christ, the errors that are contrary to the various teachings of the Church, the ship, that is, all human kind was in danger. But, after the passion of Christ there is the calm of faith, the peace of the world, conversion to God, and all things were secure. So we will see how after Jonah has been thrown overboard the sea ceases from its raging.

1:15-16

And they took Jonah, and cast him into the sea, and the sea ceased from raging. And the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and sacrificed victims to the Lord, and made vows.

they took Jonah- Now by seizing him, but they were carrying him with respect and honor.

Jonah- Christ

cast him- Without him struggling against the will of God, but rather he went willingly.

the men feared the Lord- From all their spirit, and all their heart, and all their power.

the men feared. Before the Passion, the men cried to their gods (Jonah 1:5); after the Passion, they feared God with great fear. Moreover, they sacrificed victims, which reading literally they did not do in the midst of the waves, but spiritual victims. They vowed that they would never depart from God any longer, they recognized from the disappearing storm that what the prophet had spoken was true.

CHAPTER 2

2:1-2

Now the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah: and Jonah was in the belly of a fish for three days and three nights. And Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, out of the belly of the fish.

prepared- The Lord commanded death and hell to receive the prophet. And the whale had such joy in devouring him, but such sadness in spitting him out.

and Jonah was in- For as Jonah was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights (Mt 12:40).

And Jonah prayed- After he felt safe in the belly of the whale he turns to pray to God for mercy.

the Lord prepared: It can mean that God created this whale even at the beginning of creation; Or it means that He caused it to come to the ship and to take Jonah who has been thrown overboard, and to provide his rescue, not his death. So he who felt the wrath of God in the boat was to feel his mercy in his death.

And Jonah was: By the fact that Jonah was in the whale's belly three days and nights, this indicates a type of the Lord's Passion, as well as his prayer is a type of prayer that Christ prayed.

If one believes how three children thrown into a furnace of hot fire were so well protected that their clothes were not even singed (see Daniel 3), should they not expect the safety of Jonah in the belly of the whale?

Some take the view according to the day before the Sabbath (*παρασκευή*), because of the solar eclipse from the sixth to the ninth hour when night followed day, this would be two days and nights, and adding the Sabbath, believe that we should count this as three days and three nights. But I prefer to understand this by reason of *συνεκδοχικως*, seeing the whole as a part:

2:3

And he said: I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and he heard me: I cried out of the belly of hell, and you have heard my voice.

I cried out- Christ was free among the dead (Ps 87:6), who was living in hell and crying out, "*You will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you allow your Holy One to see corruption* (Ps 15:10)."

belly of hell- From the belly of a whale, whose great size, it was like the place of hell.

you have heard- Who tries the hearts and the minds

2:4

And you have cast me forth into the deep, in the heart of the sea, and a flood has compassed me: all your billows, and your waves have passed over me.

heart of the sea- This signifies hell, for which reason the Gospel speaks of heart of the earth (Mt 12:40), because just as the heart is in the middle of an animal, so also hell is considered to be in the middle of the earth.

As for the person of Jonah the mystical interpretation is not difficult: the time when Jonah was closed in the belly of the whale in the middle of the sea, the Savior of the world appeared in the flesh and was tested. For in this comparison we see the celestial sea and the storm, about which is spoken, "*I stick fast in the mire of the deep and there is no sure standing*", and again, "*and a tempest has overwhelmed me* (Ps 68:3)."

heart of the sea: According to anagoge¹ Jesus recalls that he is "*in the heart of the sea*", that is in the middle of temptations. However, although He has been among the bitter waters and been tempted by all things without sin, He has not felt the bitter waters, but has been surrounded by the sweetness of the river and He was refreshed, which '*makes the city of God joyful* (Ps 45:5).'

In the person of Jonah all these things are revealed to have been fulfilled to the letter: In Christ every temptation, which by God's will did not befall him overwhelmingly, but fleetingly, was without sin, since he lost his powers only for this purpose, that those who were wont to imperil such things might through his conquest be delivered.

2:5

And I said: I am cast away out of the sight of thy eyes: but yet I shall see the holy temple again.

but yet- Although he was cast out for the meantime.

I will see- But at the bottom of the sea and with a prophetic spirit he found himself elsewhere.

I am cast away: Jesus had taken on the form of a slave, imitating human frailty, crying out to be heard, saying, "Oh Father, when I was with you, your light I was also light, I did not say "I am cast out", I was made man that I might lead the human race back to you.

I shall see the holy temple: This agrees with Jonah, who with a feeling of desire and confidence, with a prophetic spirit watched this happen. That which belongs to Christ, however is read, "*Father glorify me with yourself, with the glory that I had with you before the world existed* (Jn 17:5)." Just as the Father is the temple of the Son, so also the Son is the temple of the Father. Of whom He said, "*I came forth from the Father and have come into the world* (Jn 16:28)."

¹ (Greek: *anagogikos*, that which leads up; e.g., the teachings of the Bible lead to eternal life)

That division of the typical sense which includes blessings to be hoped for, and which refers particularly to the future life. The rest which the Israelites found in Chanaan is anagogically typical of eternal rest in heaven (Psalm 94; Hebrews 4). Jerusalem in its anagogical sense is typical of the Church triumphant.

2:6

The waters compassed me about even to the soul: the deep has closed me round about, the sea has covered my head.

the deep- The waters of the world, which drag mud with them, warm the body, but kill the soul; still, they could not harm Christ, because He had taken them up not out of necessity, but out of His own will.

The deep: Or abyss here is considered opposing powers, or the specific powers in torture and supplication; the demons in the Gospel ask not to be forced to go there (Mt 8:31).

2:7

I went down to the lowest parts of the mountains: the bars of the earth have shut me up forever: and you will bring up my life from corruption, O Lord, my God.

have shut me up- Human opinion. Another version closed.

bring up- However, "You shall not suffer your Holy One to see corruption (Ps. 15:10; Ac. 13:35)."

corruption- Even in death the corrupted meat of animals pass through.

my God- This is a feeling of flattery: he thinks that God, who is common to all, is also common to him, and feels he is his own because of the greatness of His benevolence.

History is clear that Jonah went down to the depths of the earth, by which as bars and columns by the will of God the earthly sphere is supported.

Allegorically. For in Christ, the chief man, whose head is the soul, which governs the body, went down to the lower regions where the souls of men were held under the power of the devil. These are the bars which do not let the spirits out of the grave; the Lord breaks these bars, and those who enclosed and bound by the bars were set free.

2:8

When my soul was in distress within me, I remembered the Lord: that my prayer may come to you, unto the holy temple.

in distress- And when no hope was left in the whale's belly from the weakness of the flesh: everything that seemed impossible I found to be surpassed by the remembrance of the Lord.

come to you, unto the holy temple- I do this, but 'they that in vain observe vanities, forsake their own mercy.'

was in distress: These things refer to Christ, when he said, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death (Mt 26:38)." And again: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit (Lk 23:46)."

may come to you: Therefore, I was mindful of God in tribulation, in order that my prayer might ascend to Heaven, so that I come to your Holy Temple where you reside in eternal beatitude. He speaks like a High Priest who requests that the statements will ascend to his God that in his body the people should be freed.

2:9

They that in vain observe vanities, forsake their own mercy.

forsake their own mercy- that which is reserved for them. Mercy does not curse them, but waits for them to return.

observe vanities: Since all things are vain, everybody necessarily indulges in vanity. But not everyone guards vanity like a treasure, nor loves what he indulges in and, as a consequence, he does not deny mercy to the human race.

By nature God is merciful and ready by His mercy to save those whom He can't save by their own righteousness. But through our own faults we leave the mercy that He offers to us. And note that the prophet, in the belly of the whale and in danger, forgets the philosophies and the general opinions about the nature of things.

The Jews, while keeping the traditions of men, forsook the commandments of God, which had always been their own.

2:10-11

But I with the voice of praise will sacrifice to you: I will pay whatsoever I have vowed for my salvation to the Lord. And the Lord spoke to the fish: and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

But I- who have been eaten for the sake of the safety of the multitude.

will sacrifice to you- who am myself the victim and high priest.

vomited- The whale, that is the deep and hell are then ordered to restore the Savior to earth, and led with him many others who were held by the bonds of death. This means that triumphant life has emerged from the deepest parts of death.

But I with the voice: Before the Passion of Christ, he fled in obedience to God, He says, "It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs." And again, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me (Mt 26:39). But after His death, He left at his own accord to preach after his resurrection that He underwent as he was ordered to do before his Passion.

I have vowed: In the Passion, Christ dedicated us all to His Father, so that none of those who had been given to Him would perish. He promised it for the salvation of all. And let us not make Him a liar, let us be pure, so that He can offer us to His Father.

CHAPTER 3

3:1

And the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time saying:

And the word: The command is given, he hears it, he refuses, then he is forced to want, and the second time he carries out the will of the Father: all of this is connected to Christ and to the "*form of a slave*" (Phil 2:7).

Not to be said to the prophet, "why have you not done what you were ordered to do?." But the punishment of the shipwreck and his devouring are enough for him to understand the Lord, the liberator, whom he hadn't known to be ordering.

3:2

Arise, and go to Nineveh, the great city: and preach in it the preaching that I bid you.

Nineveh- that is, the world.

preach- clearly.

that I bid you- I speak not of myself, but of the Son.

3:3

And Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord: now Nineveh was a great city of three days' journey.

Jonah- Christ.

arose- from death. Promptly obeying.

went- through the Apostles. Commanded.

And Jonah arose: Allegorically. Properly speaking Christ is said to rise from the grave, when He sends the Apostles to preach and to baptize men in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. So there are the three days of journey! This, however, is to be called the sacrament of human salvation, by way of one day, that is, by his confession of one God, Jonah is fulfilled, that is, Christ is preached among the Apostles, who said: "*I am with you til the end of the age* (Mt 28:20)."

now Nineveh was: Nineveh was so large that it could hardly be circled in three day's journey. But he remembers the command he has been given and the shipwreck and makes the normal journey of three days quickly in one day. However, there are some people who believe that he simply preached his message in a third of the city, and the rest of his spoken word quickly reached the others.

He does not say, "for three days and three nights" or "a day and a night", but absolutely "three days", and "a day", to show that in the mystery of the Trinity and of the confession of one God there is no darkness.

3:4

And Jonah began to enter into the city one day's journey: and he cried and said: Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.

cried- Christ, standing in the temple, cried out, "*If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink* (Jn 7:37)." For every word of Christ is called a cry because He speaks of important things.

forty days: Yet "three days" and Nineveh shall be destroyed according to the Septuagint; whether forty days, or whether it be by three days, the same thing is signified about Christ, because He spent that number of days with His disciples after the resurrection, and then ascended into Heaven, but by the three days, because He rose on the third day. (St. Augustine City of God Bk XLV. 44)

It is not a prophecy emanating from the foreknowledge of God, where all things remain exactly as they are, but it is a threat aimed at correction, announcing a just revenge in accordance with the present sins of the Ninevites.

The number forty is suitable for sinners in their penance and prayer, and works and tears, and petitions and perseverance. This is the number that both Moses and Elijah, and Christ Himself had fasted. This led us to prepare a number for our own souls to eat the body of Christ.

Beautiful order. God commands the prophet, the prophet preaches to the city, first to those who believe, they proclaimed a fast, regardless of age everyone wears sackcloth. The men do not announce the putting on of sackcloth, but only preach fasting. All the same, with reason, those to whom penitence has been proscribed wear sackcloth and fast on an empty stomach, and mourning, and pray to the mighty God.

3:5

And the men of Nineveh believed in God: and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least.

men- Those who come from "*a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of Christ* (Eph 4:13)."

believed- the foreskin believed, but circumcision remained without faith.

fast- Sackcloth and fasting are the weapons of penitence.

the least- Because no one is without sin, not even an infant of one day.

Those who had offended God through their luxury and pomp, or by condemning all that they had themselves previously offended with. First of all, fasting is offered to God in secret, and then sackcloth, which is offered outwardly to men.

Nineveh fell, which was impious, and Nineveh just arose, which was not. Its walls and houses standing, it was ruined in their wicked manners: and though the prophet was saddened that the event did not meet the threats and terrors his prophecy of Nineveh, it nevertheless came as it was predicted in the divine foreknowledge.

men- Those who come from "*a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of Christ* (Eph 4:13)."

believed- the foreskin believed, but circumcision remained without faith.

fast- Sackcloth and fasting are the weapons of penitence.

the least- Because no one is without sin, not even an infant of one day.

3:6

And the word came to the king of Nineveh: and he rose up out of his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed in sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

of his throne- He humbled himself, laying down the height of power and eloquence.

was clothed- penance for past evils.

ashes- not of unclean opinions, but of words.

And the word came: After the world's weak and ignoble had been chosen, the word of Christ finally reached the philosophers and the powerful, who seemed to rule the world. First Peter the fisherman enters, then Cyprian, first being idolatrous, and finally believes he became champion of the truth, after hearing the words of Jonah, he calls Carthage to repentance, and publicly proclaims Christ. Behold, the King of Nineveh arose from his throne, exchanged his purple for sackcloth, his perfumes for mud, and cleanness for uncleanness. It is very difficult for the powerful in this world to go from eloquence to lowliness and to be converted to Christ.

3:7

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Nineveh, from the mouth of the king and of his princes, saying: Let neither men nor beasts, oxen, nor sheep taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water.

men- reasonable.

beasts- the foolish. "*Men and beasts You will preserve, O Lord* (Ps 35:7)."

oxen- the wise.

sheep- the simple.

And he caused it: Hence the Septuagint, by the order of the king and his nobles, it was announced throughout Nineveh. And has been proclaimed by the king at Nineveh and from all his ancestors.

3:8-9

And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. 3:9 Who can tell if God will turn, and forgive: and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish?

sackcloth- Mourning cloth, the worry and sadness that are metaphorically by sackcloth.

let them turn- to the Lord.

from his evil way- which of themselves.

their hands- not only in thought but also in their deeds.

will turn- conversion.

and- thus God will forgive.

fierce- which He would almost have begun to unleash His wrath.

perish- I will convert.

Who can tell: Under ambiguity, he says, "they present as a question, in order that doubting their salvation, they may more forcefully do penance, and may better rouse God to mercy."

3:10

And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had said that he would do to them, and he did it not.

the evil- affliction.

And God saw: Just as for the Ninivites, every day God threatens destruction to the whole world, in order that they may do penance. If they convert, then the Lord will change His sentence, and it will be changed by the conversion of the people.

But God did not hear those words that Israel often promised: "*so declare unto us, and we will do it* (Jer 42:40)," but he sees the works. And because He prefers a sinner's repentance rather than his death (Ez 33:11) He willingly changes His sentence because He has seen a change in the works. Or rather God has continued in His plan, since He originally wanted to have pity. No one in fact who desires to punish, threatens what he will actually do.

CHAPTER 4

4:1

And Jonah was exceedingly troubled, and was angry:

For he had said that he wanted to run away, and accuses the Lord of injustice in a certain manner. That said, I have interpreted as '*I beseech you*' is read as ANNA in Hebrew, which seems to me to express the prayer with a kind of coaxing.

was exceedingly troubled: It is not the multitude of the Gentiles who should be saved that made him grieve, but it is that he sees his own nation going perish, and that he had been the only one of the prophets chosen to announce the people's ruin to them through the salvation of others and the lost hope for Israel. Moreover our Lord wept for Jerusalem and refused to take bread away from the children to give to the dogs (Mt 15:26). And the Apostles preach firstly to Israel (Acts 13:46), and Paul wishes to be accursed for his brothers who are Israelites (Rom 9:3). But Jonah, which means grieving even unto death, is saddened for the people of the Jews who shall die. The name of the griever is also appropriate to the story, since it signifies the labor of the prophet, weighed down by the miseries of his journey and the shipwreck.

4:2

And he prayed to the Lord, and said: I beseech you, O Lord, is not this what I said, when I was yet in my own country? therefore I went before to flee into Tharsis: for I know that you are a gracious and merciful God, patient, and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil.

to the Lord- "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death [Mt. 26:38; Mk 14:34]." And again: "Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit (Ps. 30:6)."

my life from me- I was not able to save the whole nation of Israel by living, but I will die and the whole world will be saved.

For I know that: I knew that you are merciful and would do this: this is why I refused to denounce you as fierce. Therefore I wanted to be free to flee to Tharsis in contemplation, and I preferred the quiet and rest on the sea of this age. I left my home, I left your bosom. If I had said that you are merciful, gentle, that you pardon wickedness, no one would have repented. If I had denounced you as a cruel God, I knew that such is not your nature. In this dilemma I preferred to flee, rather than to deceive those repenting with mildness, or to preach things about you that you are not.

4:3-4

And now, O Lord, I beseech you take my life from me: for it is better for me to die than to live. 4:4 And the Lord said: Do you think you have reason to be angry?

And with reason God does not say to him: 'you are wrong to get angry' lest He seem to find fault with the one made sad. Nor does He say, 'you have reason to be angry', so as not to contradict His former sentence. But He asks him whether he is angry so that he replies the causes of his anger or suffering, or even, if he remains quiet, so that God's truth can be proved by his silence about the judgment.

4:5

Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat toward the east side of the city; and he made himself a booth there, and he sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would befall the city.

of the city- the world.

himself- He makes it himself, for no inhabitant of Nineveh of that age would have been able to live with the prophet.

sat- He sits as a judge or by the majesty of his contract.

see- Recourse to Scriptures to preach to God about human feelings.

Jonah the dove, or grieving, comes out of the city which Cain built, and lives in the east whence the sun rises. And it is there in his tent, where having contemplated the state of the world, he waits to see what is going to happen. Before Nineveh was saved and before the gourd dried up, before the Gospel of Christ, the manifested true East (Zec 6:12), Jonah was under the shadow because the truth was not yet open.

4:6

And the Lord God prepared an ivy, and it came up over the head of Jonah, to be a shadow over his head, and to cover him (for he was fatigued): and Jonah was exceeding glad of the ivy.

came up- showing the miraculous power of God.

God prepared: For ivy in Hebrew we read ciceion, which grows quickly and dries quickly, could be compared to Israel, it sends its little roots into the ground and trying to raise itself up, but is not able to equal the height of cedars and cypress trees of God.

Ivy or type of shrub or sapling having broad leaves and sustaining a very dense shadow, which creeps across the ground, and without supports by which is supported does not seek the heights. But God prepared this, so that rising up on high without any support, it would supply shelter to the prophet in whom the power of God was revealed. Israel is compared to this ivy or gourd, which formerly covered Jonah under its shadow foreshadowing the conversion of the Gentiles to Christ, and it granted great joy to him making a shadow better than a house, having the likeness of a roof, but not having foundation.

4:7

But God prepared a worm, when the morning arose on the following

day: and it struck the ivy and it withered.

worm- Christ, who says "*I am a worm and not a man* (Ps 21:7)."

ivy- which was green before the rise of the Sun of Justice, but when Christ rose, the shade was deprived of the help of God and lost all its greenery.

God prepared: Some understand the worm and the burning wind represent the Romans, who, after the resurrection of Christ, completely destroyed Israel.

4:8

And when the sun was risen, the Lord commanded a hot and burning wind: and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, and he broiled with the heat: and he desired for his soul that he might die, and said: It is better for me to die than to live.

sun- The light dispersed the darkness of the Ninevites.

hot- And also in Hosea, "*The Lord will bring a burning wind that shall rise from the desert, and it shall dry up his springs, and shall make his fountain desolate* (Hos 13:15)."

broiled- with Israel.

might die- In the baptismal font in order to receive the moisture lost in denial. This is why Peter speaks to the Jews who are parched, saying, "*Do penance: and be baptized every one of you, so you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:38)."

4:9

And the Lord said to Jonah: Do you think you have reason to be angry, for the ivy? And he said: I am angry with reason even unto death.

Lord- the Father.

to Jonah- the Son.

reason to be angry: Before this time, when the people of Nineveh were saved through penance, the prophet, when questioned, did not respond, but by his silence, he assented to the questioning of God. For he knew God is merciful and pardoning wickedness and he did not feel sad for the salvation of the Gentiles; but once the gourd, Israel had dried up, and when he is asked, 'do you well to be angry for the gourd?', he replies with assurance, 'I do well to be angry and to suffer even unto death. I did not want to save one only to see the others perish, to gain foreigners only to lose my own'. And in truth up until this day Christ weeps for Jerusalem and he weeps until death; not his own death, but that of the Jews, so that they die refusing and rise up again confessing the Son of God.

4:10

And the Lord said: You are grieved for the ivy, for which you have not labored, nor made it to grow, which in one night came up, and in one night perished.

you- Son.

the ivy- Jews condemned.

in one night- that is, the time before the coming of Christ.

one night perished- when the Sun of Justice set for them.

you have not labored: In this instance Israel declares confidently, "*Behold, for so many years do I serve you, and yet you have never given me a kid, who has devoured his substance with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf* (Lk 15:29-30)." He did not refute. But in this account he hears, "all that I have is yours (Lk 15:31). Now we are going back to celebrate your brother's behalf." For the precious blood of Christ was shed for the Gentiles: He went down to the underworld so that this people might rise up to heaven.

4:11

And shall I not spare Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons, that know how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, and many beasts?

Nineveh- prefigures the Church in which there is a greater number of inhabitants than the twelve tribes of Israel.

know how to distinguish- And there is a great number who do not possess the faculty of reason.

This may be understood as the innocent and simple age of the very small children and the suckling beasts; hence it may be inferred how great was the number of older ones. if so great was the number of the very young. Or because Nineveh was a great city, and "*in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth*" (2 Tim 2:20) because there was a great crowd that needed to repent and was ignorant of the difference between good and evil.

